

**Folding Bronze Tablets found near Blooming Grove, Texas by R. G. Rutherford on  
March 30, 1936**



**an interpretive transcription of the tablets**

**THERE IS THAT WHOSE EXISTENCE CAN NEITHER BE PROVED NOR  
DISPROVED; NEITHER CAN ITS NONEXISTENCE.  
IT IS NOT GOD. IT IS NOT NOT-GOD.  
IT IS NOT TRANSCENDANT. IT IS NOT NOT-TRANSCENDANT.  
THOSE WHO KNOW IT - AND THEY ARE LEGION - DO NOT SPEAK OF IT,  
BECAUSE IT CANNOT BE SPOKEN OF.  
TO NAME IT, IS TO LOSE IT. TO NOT-NAME IT, IS NOT TO FIND IT.  
IF YOU THINK IT HAS LAWS, QUALITIES, LIMITATIONS, DIMENSION OR  
DISPLACEMENTS, YOU ARE THINKING LIKE AN ANT.  
IF YOU THINK IT COMES OR GOES, WAITS OR HURRIES, EMBRACES OR  
REJECTS, REWARDS OR PUNISHES, YOU ARE THINKING LIKE AN  
AMOEBEA.**

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# The Predicament of Buddha

By Franklin Merrell-Wolff

*From Experience and Philosophy*

I turn to the Gospel of Buddha and find these words: "he -- the worldling -- will call resignation what to the Enlightened One is purest Joy. He will see annihilation where the Perfected One finds Immortality. He will regard as death what the Conqueror of Self knows to be Life Everlasting."

According to the record, this was said soon after Gautama had attained Enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. At first the Tathagata was tempted to keep silence, for it seemed useless to preach a Message of Liberation which certainly could not be understood by most men. In the end, Buddha decided to give the Message for the benefit of those who could understand. But the problem He faced is a very fundamental one, since it is very difficult for the man who is bound to subject-object consciousness to conceive of another kind of Life where egoism ceases. The average man can imagine a heaven or a hell built upon the subject-object pattern where life is more intense, whether in a pleasurable or painful sense, but the truly Emancipated Life is beyond his comprehension. The Christian world has interpreted the Kingdom of Heaven as simply a sublimated subject-object domain, and thus quite missed the real meaning of Jesus. Christ brought a Message of Emancipation, just as Buddha did, and Its meaning was exactly the same, though stated in a form to fit the consciousness of a different people. Few, indeed, of the Christian world have ever truly understood His meaning. A subject-object world experienced after physical death as a highly blissful state is not Liberation. Essentially it is not different from this present world right here. Consequently such a world could be represented in terms of conceptual language just as this is. But such is not the case with respect to Nirvana or the Kingdom of Heaven.

The impossibility of genuinely formulating and conveying to others what the Liberated State is is not simply the difficulty afforded in trying to give expression to an unfamiliar experience. The problem, in the latter case, may be great but it is not, in principle, beyond solution. It is simply a question of inventing the appropriate concepts and word-signs, and this can be done by men who are sufficiently skillful. But the kind of consciousness that falls outside the subject-object field is more than difficult to express in relative

terms. It is absolutely impossible to do so. It is not simply a question of our not yet having developed sufficient skill. The impossibility inheres in the fact that the subject-object form, essential to language as such, can only distort the Transcendent. The "Kingdom of Heaven" and "Nirvana" are simply names pointing to a deathless Reality. But that Reality is ever something other than anything that can be conceived in relative terms. **Hence it is the negation of everything we know in the subject-object sense. Thus, It is not-evil and not-good, not-large and not-small, not-colored and not-colorless, and so on through all pairs of opposites. More than this, It is not-good and not not-good, not-large and not not-large, not-colored and not not-colored, and so on, also, through all pairs of contradictories. This means that It is not to be found anywhere in the "universe of discourse," as understood in logic.** Naturally, this must appear as annihilation to the subject-object consciousness.

Yet, in point of fact, It is Infinite Life. It is pure Joy, the utterly satisfying Richness. It is the absolutely certain Knowledge. But It can be Known only through Identity. Once it is known, even though it be for but a moment, then It is realized as the one and only adequate solution of human misery. More than that, It supplies the basis which, alone, affords an adequate solution of the final problems of philosophy and science. The combined testimony of Those who have attained Realization builds well the case for the Reality of this Transcendent World, and something deep in the heart of every man whispers: "Yes, it is so." If only men would listen to this still, small Voice!

But man must be born again before he can Know. And He who is born again is There, whether or not He remains correlated with embodiment in the relative world. In being born again, he has died to subject-object consciousness, in the essential sense, even though he continues to function in this field. He has died in a far more fundamental sense than is true of the worldly man who merely departs from the physical body. The latter type of transition does not lead out of the subject-object domain. But the Great Transition leads beyond the ordinary heaven and hell, just as much as it does beyond this world.

That which man overcomes finally in the Great Transition is the vehicle of egoism. This is an entirely different matter from that of merely losing the instruments of action and of relative knowledge in a particular one of consciousness.